

now, since October of 2001. After months of work, last March Congress finally extended emergency unemployment benefits to workers who have lost their jobs during the economic downturn, but this is no longer adequate.

Under the extension, unemployed workers in 48 States received 13 additional weeks of benefits, and those in 2 States received 26 weeks. My State, the State of Oregon, was one of those two States, as our economy has been hurt, in a relative sense, worse than any other in the United States.

Now those benefits are ending for Oregonians. Starting this month about 1,000 Oregonians a week will stop receiving badly needed emergency unemployment benefits. That is a lot of buying power that will leave the economy of the State of Oregon if it happens but, more importantly, there will be an awful lot of human hardship that will ensue among these Oregonians if it happens.

These benefits are not gratuitous. They are not excessive. They are the barest of safety nets required by these families. For many of these families, as I have said, 1,000 a week, these benefits will cease if we do not act before we go home. For that reason, we are, again, introducing legislation, this time the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2002, in an effort to provide for these families.

Under this new legislation, those Oregonians will receive up to an additional 20 weeks of emergency benefits. This is a temporary extension through July of 2003. Oregon's unemployment rate is simply the highest in America, and this is the least we can do for those who are bearing most of the burden of this economic downturn.

I am going to join with Senator KENNEDY and Senator WELLSTONE again to work in a bipartisan way to get this bill passed before we go home and influence our leadership to come to an agreement, as the assistant Republican leader indicated his willingness to do. This is a must-do before we go home.

I thank my colleagues for the time and yield the floor.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to address the increasingly serious problem of unemployment in the United States, in particular the number of workers who have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits and are still unable to find work.

According to the latest data from the Department of Labor, the adjusted unemployment rate in the United States is now 5.7 percent, with over 8.1 million, 8.1 million, workers now unemployed. 1.4 million other workers who want work but cannot find it are not included in this total because they had not looked for work in the four weeks before the survey was completed.

In my State of New Mexico, we are doing much, much worse than this. Our adjusted unemployment rate is 6.3 percent, which puts us at number nine in the Nation in terms of the worst unemployment rate. Our unadjusted unem-

ployment rate is 6.6 percent. We have had an increase of 31.6 percent in initial unemployment insurance claims since July 2001, and an increase of 33.4 percent in continued unemployment insurance claims in that same time-frame.

The bottom line in my State and across the Nation is that jobs are being lost, and there are no new jobs being created that workers can apply for. Even worse, the workers that have not been able to find work now face an additional crisis, that being that they have been on unemployment insurance for as long as allowed and will soon no longer be eligible for new benefits.

According to the Department of Labor, by the end of August over 1.1 million workers have exhausted the extended unemployment insurance benefits provided by the stimulus legislation and now have no funding at all available to them. According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, this number will rise to over 2.2 million by the end of 2002. The number of workers who exhausted their regular unemployment insurance benefits in August 2002 was 46 percent higher than the number of who exhausted such benefits in August 2001. The number who exhausted their regular unemployment benefits in the first six months of 2002 is 75 percent greater than the number who exhausted these benefits in the first eight months of 2001, and is more than double the number who exhausted these benefits during the same months of 2000.

For workers in New Mexico and across the Nation, these data are truly frightening. And in spite of these data, the comments we keep hearing from the administration is that we are on the verge of a recovery, or we have a strong foundation for a recovery, or the recovery is just around the corner. But I see no evidence of this. Investment in new research and development is falling. Investment in new equipment is flat. Production is falling. Lay-offs are rising. From what I can tell the economy stalled, and I have seen no evidence at all that the administration knows what to do. Even worse, from what I can tell there is a complete lack of concern in the administration about where the economy is going right now. Nothing is being said about what should be done or when it should be done.

Given this lack of response by the administration, I say it is time we in Congress act. The Emergency Unemployment Insurance Act of 2002 is a very positive step in this direction. Its purpose is very straightforward: it will revise and extend the temporary unemployment program to provide an additional 20 weeks of temporary extended benefits for "high unemployment" States, States like New Mexico, and an additional 13 weeks to all other states until June 2003.

As a practical matter, this means workers can continue to get unemployment insurance benefits while they

continue to search for work. In my view it is the least we can do for these folks. Unemployment insurance offers at most a subsistence-level existence, and most workers who receive benefits are forced to choose between paying for education, health care, mortgages, and food. These are folks that have played by the rules over the years and now find themselves in hard times. Personally, I would prefer that we offer them more, but if we cannot, then it seems to me we should be able to offer them some minimal financial security when they need it the most.

So I want to add my voice to the others today and say that we must pass this legislation before we go out on recess. American workers deserve to be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner, especially in this time of need. They need a lifeline, and it's up to us to provide it. I recognize that there are a number of important issues that we have to address in a very short time-frame. But from where I sit, this is a priority. The administration can talk all it wants about how the economy is going to improve, but what matters to the folks in my home state is whether they can find good jobs and keep them. Right now, they can't do that. We need to give them some help until they can. This is one step in that direction.

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#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CARNAHAN.) Morning business is closed.

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#### HOMELAND SECURITY ACT OF 2002

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 11 a.m. having arrived, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 5005, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5005) to establish the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Lieberman amendment No. 4471, in the nature of a substitute.

Gramm-Miller amendment No. 4738 (to amendment No. 4471), of a perfecting nature, to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States.

Nelson of Nebraska amendment No. 4740 (to amendment No. 4738) to modify certain personnel provisions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be an hour for debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. SARBANES. Madam President, pursuant to the unanimous consent agreement, I have been allocated 5 minutes to speak?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.